

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mrs SCHLEICHER

on behalf of the Group of the European People's
Party (Christian Democratic Group)

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on preventive measures relating to disasters
during the transport of dangerous substances

The European Parliament,

whereas:

- numerous accidents relating to the transport of dangerous substances have been recorded:
 - 1977 Italy - a tanker carrying carbon tetrachloride plunged into a river
 - 1978 Munich - leakage of 2000 litres of poisonous chromic acid
 - 1978 Spain - accident involving a tanker carrying propane
 - 1978 Belgium - accident involving a railway truck carrying propane
 - 1978 England - accident involving a tanker carrying formaldehyde
 - 1980 France - accident involving a tanker carrying vinyl gas and also the accidents at Seveso, Flixborough and Harrisburg, USA,
- dangerous substances, included those which are transported, are increasing continually and similarly the unease of the general public which is becoming more aware of the hazards of accidents involving dangerous substances,
- there are differences in individual Member States' safety requirements for the transport of dangerous substances whether by road, rail, water, air or by pipeline and preventive measures and very stringent safety requirements will still not provide complete protection against accidents during the transport of dangerous substances (about 50% of which are caused by human error),
- the possible consequences of an accident involving dangerous substances are wide-ranging - for example shock waves, fire, poisoning, toxicity, radioactivity, pollution of the air, water and soil,
- the risk factor in accidents involving dangerous substances is such that whilst accidents do not occur frequently the possible consequences can be very great,
- the emergency workers concerned with any accident involving dangerous goods (police, fire-brigades etc.) are not scientists and, given the large numbers of dangerous substances (several thousand), it is impossible for them to have a detailed knowledge of the effects and possible countermeasures,
- however, in an accident involving dangerous goods the decisive factor is to provide effective assistance quickly. The main problem, therefore, is one of information i.e. what product is involved, what protection must be afforded to rescue workers and the action to be taken,

- it would appear that of the Community countries as yet only the United Kingdom has effective links between information sources and emergency workers using specialists at the Harwell Research Centre, while the Netherlands has a specialist task force,

Proposes the creation of an integrated computer operated European emergency information centre for dangerous substances providing information on the maximum number of dangerous substances in several languages and with a standard form of access using all methods of communication throughout the European Community;

Calls on the Commission:

- to examine what possibilities already exist and what measures must be taken to create such a central pool of information,
- to establish whether sufficient attention is paid to adequate training of transport workers in all Community countries.